United Nations A/60/401

General Assembly

Distr.: General
3 October 2005

Original: English

Sixtieth session
Agenda item 52 (b)
Sustainable development: Follow-up and implementation of the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States

Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States

Report of the Secretary-General*

Summary

The present report summarizes actual and proposed programming to support further implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, within the framework of the respective mandates and work plans of the organizations and bodies of the United Nations system. The report represents an interim response to the mandate of General Assembly resolution 59/311, in which the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, in consultation with the relevant bodies of the United Nations system, is requested to articulate a plan for the coherent implementation of the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States.

The report also describes a comprehensive approach to promote and strengthen implementation of the Mauritius Strategy by all stakeholders, national, regional and international.

* Submission of the present report was delayed in order to facilitate inter-agency consultation.

05-53378 (E) 251005

Contents

		Paragraphs	*Page*
I.	Introduction	1–7	3
II.	Framework of action to strengthen implementation and follow-up	8–30	4
	A. Enhancing United Nations system response	10–20	4
	1. Mainstreaming small island developing States in the United Nations system	10–12	4
	2. United Nations system coordination and collaboration	13–14	5
	3. United Nations Secretariat support	15–20	6
	B. Strengthening national ownership	21–24	7
	1. National implementation	21	7
	2. Civil society participation	22	7
	3. Partnership initiatives	23–24	8
	C. Regional and international support	25–30	8
	1. Strengthening regional frameworks	25–27	8
	2. Convening regional follow-up meetings	28	9
	3. International support and advocacy	29–30	9
III.	Summary of programmes to operationalize the Mauritius Strategy	31–48	10
IV.	The way forward	49–50	16
Annex			
	Matrix of actions to operationalize the Mauritius Strategy		17

I. Introduction

1. The unique challenges facing small island developing States within the context of sustainable development were first formally recognized by the international community when it articulated at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in 1992, the special case of small island developing States in chapter 17 of Agenda 21. The Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of small island developing States, adopted two years later in Barbados, hailed as the first concrete expression of international partnership for sustainable development, advanced a multidisciplinary and cross-sectoral programme detailing priority actions which should be implemented to respond to the special challenges faced by small island developing States.

2. The International Meeting to Review Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of small island developing States, held in Port Louis, Mauritius, from 10 to 14 January 2005, presented a significant opportunity 10 years later not only to assess progress achieved in the implementation of the Programme of Action, but, more important, to consider how best to invest future effort for more effective implementation of the broad framework for the sustainable development of small island developing States.

3. Convened in the very region devastated by a tsunami only two weeks earlier, on 26 December 2004, the International Meeting brought into stark relief the vulnerability of low-lying island and coastal States to environmental hazards, infusing the debate and decision-making with a sense of urgency and resolve that contributed to the pragmatic and productive outcome of the meeting.

4. The Mauritius Declaration reaffirms the continued validity of the Programme of Action as the blueprint for action in support of small island developing States, while taking account of new and emerging issues, and it invokes renewed political commitment to support the sustainable development strategies of small island developing States through technical and financial cooperation, regional and interregional institutional assistance and an improved international enabling environment. The importance of capacity-building, technology transfer and human resource development to building the resilience of small island developing States and to advancing implementation of the Programme of Action is also recognized.[1]

5. The Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of small island developing States responds directly to the assessed need for a more focused approach to implementation of the Programme of Action. To that end, it identifies critical areas for further attention within the established sectors of the Programme of Action, and highlights new and emerging issues which must be taken onboard if more effective implementation of the Programme of Action is to be achieved. These include HIV/AIDS and other health-related issues which constitute a fundamental development challenge; security concerns; the impact of the erosion of trade preferences on small island developing States and the consequent need for improved market access and an international trading system that promotes economic growth, employment and development for all; support for information and communication technology (ICT) development; and the importance of protecting cultural diversity and promoting cultural industries as a vital component of sustainable development strategy in small island developing States.[2]

6. Beyond specific sectoral issues identified for continued attention, the Mauritius Strategy promotes the fullest participation of civil society and other stakeholder groups, advocates greater South-South and small island developing States-small island developing States cooperation and articulates a range of cross-sectoral measures, regional and interregional mechanisms and strategies for enhanced inter-institutional consultation and coordination, particularly within the United Nations system, as essential tools to be employed in strengthening implementation of the Programme of Action.

7. With the adoption of the Mauritius Declaration and Strategy and the contributions from the Panel discussions, high-level round tables and civil society forums, including a youth dialogue, the international community renewed and enhanced its understanding and appreciation of the economic, social and environmental vulnerabilities of small island developing States, and sought to bring greater coherence and strategic focus to the implementation of the small island developing States agenda at the national, regional and international levels.

II. Framework of action to strengthen implementation and follow-up

8. In its resolution 59/311, in which it endorsed the outcomes of the Mauritius International Meeting, the General Assembly set markers to promote comprehensive implementation, monitoring and follow-up of the Mauritius Strategy. In addition to exhorting all relevant actors at the national, regional and international levels to take timely actions to ensure effective implementation of the Mauritius outcomes and encouraging partnership initiatives, it mandated the mainstreaming of the Mauritius Strategy in the work programmes of the relevant agencies of the United Nations system, within the framework of their respective mandates; it requested the preparation of a plan for the coordinated implementation of the Mauritius Strategy by the United Nations system; and it supported the convening in 2005/06 of regional meetings of small island developing States in partnership with relevant stakeholders to address follow-up of implementation of the Mauritius Strategy. The General Assembly also welcomed the decision of the Commission on Sustainable Development at its thirteenth session to devote one day of the review sessions of the Commission to the review of the Mauritius Strategy, and reiterated its request for strengthening of the Small Island Developing States Unit in the Department of Economic and Social Affairs.

9. These mandates, addressed in further detail below, form the basis for the fashioning of a broad framework of action for promoting, strengthening and monitoring implementation of the Programme of Action and the Mauritius Strategy.

A. Enhancing United Nations system response

1. Mainstreaming small island developing States in the United Nations system

10. A significant achievement of the Mauritius Strategy was its effort to ensure the mainstreaming of small island developing States in the programming of the organizations and bodies of the United Nations system, within their respective

mandates and areas of expertise. The small island developing States agenda, which hitherto had gone unremarked and unaccounted for in broader development agendas and plans of action, must now be incorporated into the respective programmes of work from the planning stage. To that end, focal points for small island developing States should be designated in all relevant agencies.

11. The Commission on Sustainable Development will continue to be the primary intergovernmental body responsible for oversight of the implementation and follow-up to the commitments related to small island developing States. This mandate, adopted at Mauritius, was reaffirmed at the thirteenth session of the Commission, which established the modalities whereby it would monitor implementation of the Mauritius Strategy. The Commission decided to devote one day of its review sessions (every other year) to a review of the implementation of the Mauritius Strategy, focusing on that year's thematic cluster and on any new developments on sustainable development efforts for small island developing States. To that end, the Secretary-General has been requested to submit a report to the Commission review session on progress and obstacles to sustainable development in small island developing States and to make recommendations to enhance its implementation.

12. It should be noted that at the fourteenth session of the Commission which convenes in April 2006, a review of progress achieved in the implementation in the thematic cluster on the theme "Energy, atmosphere, climate change and industrial development" will be undertaken. That session will receive a report analysing the progress in the implementation of the Mauritius Strategy in the context of the thematic cluster as it applies to small island developing States. That report will also consider any pressing new and emerging issues with implications for the broader sustainable development agenda of small island developing States.

2. United Nations system coordination and collaboration

13. The Mauritius Strategy mandate improved coordination and rationalization of all work towards implementation of the Programme of Action within the United Nations system. In its resolution 59/311, the General Assembly reiterated that, assigning to the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, in consultation with the relevant United Nations specialized agencies, regional commissions and other organizations of the United Nations system, within their respective mandates, responsibility for articulating a plan with recommendations for action for the coordinated and coherent implementation of the Mauritius Strategy.

14. The present report responds to that mandate in section III. The Department of Economic and Social Affairs, following the adoption of General Assembly resolution 59/311 in July 2005, inaugurated an inter-agency consultative group comprising all relevant United Nations bodies. All members of the group were invited to submit their contributions to develop a matrix of activities representing a programme to operationalize the Mauritius Strategy, indicating those activities in which their organization would participate in support of small island developing States, on the basis of either established or prospective mandates and programmes of work. Through ongoing consultation within that newly established group and through rationalization of the operationalization programme the Department of Economic and Social Affairs will seek to ensure a more coordinated approach to the implementation of small island developing States sustainable development issues within the United Nations system.

3. United Nations Secretariat support

15. The Department of Economic and Social Affairs, through its Small Island Developing States Unit, will continue to bear central substantive responsibility for the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States. Work of the Department in the exercise of that responsibility has so far focused on annual reporting on the implementation of the Programme of Action, ad hoc technical and advisory assistance in response to requests of small island developing States and management of the Small Island Developing States net (SIDSnet).

16. In order to effectively respond to the new thrust and the mandates and directions set out in the Mauritius Strategy and General Assembly resolution 59/311, new or expanded activities are proposed below for consideration by the General Assembly. They relate to four areas highlighted in the Strategy:

(a) System-wide coordination and monitoring of the implementation of the Strategy, including through management of a plan of operationalization, working with the newly created inter-agency consultative group on small island developing States;

(b) Support for comprehensive intergovernmental review of, and reporting on, Implementation of the Mauritius Strategy, in accordance with the biennial cycle of the Commission on Sustainable Development;

(c) Strengthened information activities for decision-making by the small island developing States;

(d) Facilitation of networking among small island developing States stakeholders to enhance multilateral consultations and cooperation towards the implementation of the Mauritius Strategy, particularly the development and implementation of an information management network.

17. Effective management of the plan of operationalization, in accordance with resolution 59/311, will be key to enhancing system-wide coordination and monitoring of Mauritius Strategy implementation. This will entail review and monitoring of the programmes supporting Programme of Action and Mauritius Strategy implementation within the agencies of the United Nations system through regular consultation with the respective small island developing States focal points represented in the inter-agency consulting group. It will also require the Small Island Developing States Unit to act as an interface with the networks of regional organizations that support and implement national, subregional and regional activities within the framework of the Mauritius Strategy.

18. Regarding the intergovernmental oversight of the implementation of the Mauritius Strategy, the Commission on Sustainable Development will devote part of each of its review sessions to a review of the small island developing States agenda, with particular focus on the thematic cluster of issues under consideration. Biennial reviews of the small island developing States agenda by the Commission will require the preparation of analytical papers on relevant thematic issues, as well as coordination of and reporting on system-wide initiatives, regional and national activities within the thematic clusters.

19. The Mauritius Strategy also calls for more effective use of ICT to support timely and broad access to economic, social and environmental information to

facilitate decision-making by the small island developing States.[3] In that context, it is proposed that the Small Island Developing States Unit develop and implement an integrated information system that will serve as a knowledge management platform for systematic information-sharing among all small island developing States stakeholders and the international community at large. This approach will contribute to effective coordination and implementation of activities under the Mauritius Strategy, and will facilitate partnership building at the local, regional and international levels.

20. To facilitate networking among all stakeholders, it is proposed that the Small Island Developing States Unit develop and introduce a series of new ICT-based tools such as discussion forums, an island development portal and an island newswire, and develop a small island developing States roster of experts and integration of e-mail accessibility, which are particularly important for small remote small island developing States with limited internet infrastructure.[4] The new knowledge management framework will support a range of services to the small island developing States communities, the United Nations system and the wider international community: enhanced ICT-driven core groups for intra/interregional communication by sector; capacity-building workshops through Decision Support System; the establishment of an information clearing house and support of interactive communities; facilitation of community involvement utilizing the Content Management System and the Learning Management System; promoting wider knowledge and awareness of the small island developing States agenda; and mechanisms to facilitate resource mobilization for small island developing States projects.

B. Strengthening national ownership

1. National implementation

21. Small island developing States ownership of the Programme of Action and assumption of principal responsibility for its implementation was reaffirmed at Mauritius. In order to strengthen the indigenous capacity of Governments to assume effective leadership in the implementation of the Mauritius Strategy, much attention will be given to supporting small island developing States efforts to devise national sustainable development strategies and to ensuring the establishment of appropriately coordinated councils or inter-institutional mechanisms to secure the commitment of local and national decision makers for more integrated, interdisciplinary planning and programming, and for more effective monitoring of and reporting on sustainable development. Promoting synergy with other major development frameworks, including the Millennium Development Goals, the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation, the Monterrey Consensus, the Doha trade agenda and the multilateral environment agreements, will be addressed through capacity-building and institutional strengthening with the support of the United Nations system.

2. Civil society participation

22. Broad stakeholder involvement in the implementation of the Mauritius Strategy was also identified as a critical element in ensuring widest possible national ownership of the sustainable development agenda in small island

developing States. Strategies to promote greater awareness, knowledge and understanding of the objectives of the Programme of Action and the Mauritius Strategy, including promotional campaigns, community-based initiatives and national workshops, will be designed. Mechanisms to facilitate the full, meaningful participation of civil society and other stakeholder groups, including the private sector, will also be considered.

3. Partnership initiatives

23. Much attention will be given to the exploration of partnership initiatives as an integral part of the strategy to harness resources at all levels and to engage traditional and non-traditional partners in the sustainable development effort. Partnership proposals will be prepared for consideration by the Governments of small island developing States, civil society, the United Nations system and the wider donor community at the regional follow-up meetings on Mauritius Strategy implementation, to be held in October 2005. Among the important initiatives to be considered are the small island developing States University Consortium and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) sponsored small island developing States Resilience Building Facility, both of which were launched at the Mauritius International Meeting.

24. Both are excellent examples of small island developing States-small island developing States, South-South cooperation, with a focus on fostering solidarity among small island developing States and on building capacity to address the unique challenges of small island developing States through shared information and expertise. The Small Island Developing States University Consortium will offer postgraduate courses at designated small island developing States universities, on campus and through distance education on subjects of direct relevance to small island developing States. The Resilience Building Facility is a much-needed mechanism to help small island developing States implement technological, administrative and even market-oriented innovations to strengthen resilience and reduce vulnerability. For these and other partnership initiatives to be successful, investment of financial resources by the donor community is crucial.

C. Regional and international support

1. Strengthening regional frameworks

25. The Mauritius Strategy ascribes a more integral role to regional technical and intergovernmental organizations in support of implementation of the Programme of Action, acknowledging economies of scale and the concentration of regional expertise to be found in these institutions. The strengthening of the respective regional institutional frameworks to support more coordinated, efficient support for the implementation of priorities for the three small island developing States regions will therefore be given focused attention. This will include the respective regional and subregional intergovernmental organizations, the regional commissions, the network of regional offices of agencies of the United Nations system and other regional technical agencies.

26. An enhanced and more integral role for the relevant regional commissions, notably the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, and the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, is envisaged, not least

because their associate members comprise the non-independent island Territories, which are an important part of the expanded family of small island developing States. Their efforts at implementation of the Programme of Action and the Mauritius Strategy will therefore be facilitated principally through the regional commissions.

27. Small island developing States-small island developing States cooperation was one of the mechanisms identified in the Mauritius review process as having been underutilized. Strong emphasis will therefore be placed on enhancing intraregional and interregional consultation among small island developing States, employing as key facilitators the regional institutions, regional intergovernmental organizations and the appropriate United Nations regional commissions found in the small island developing States of the Atlantic, Indian Ocean, Mediterranean and South China Seas (AIMS) and the Caribbean and Pacific small island developing States. By extension, wider South-South cooperation and partnership arrangements with other stakeholders and international institutions should be promoted and fostered by the small island developing States network of regional organizations. Ongoing consultation with the members of the inter-agency consultative group on small island developing States will also be pursued.

2. Convening regional follow-up meetings

28. Pursuant to the mandate of General Assembly resolution 59/311, three regional meetings to focus on measures to advance implementation of the Mauritius Strategy have been scheduled as follows:

- Caribbean Regional Meeting in St. Kitts and Nevis, 5 to 7 October 2005;
- Pacific Regional Meeting in Samoa, 17 to 19 October 2005;
- AIMS Regional Meeting in the Seychelles, 26 to 28 October 2005.

These meetings will facilitate broad consultation on the national and regional mechanisms and strategies addressed above, and will afford an opportunity for the pursuit of partnership initiatives with civil society, regional institutions, the United Nations system and the wider donor community.

3. International support and advocacy

29. At the global level, limited international awareness and appreciation of the specific social, economic and environmental vulnerabilities of the small island developing States was a concern often expressed during the review process of the Mauritius International Meeting. The importance of sustaining international attention on the Programme of Action was underscored. A consistent campaign at a high level by the United Nations was deemed necessary in order to maintain prominence of small island developing States issues on the international agenda. The review also made clear the inadequacy of international cooperation and support for the small island developing States agenda, reflected in their limited access to external resources and appropriate technologies, as well as capacity constraints. The role of advocacy was thus strongly emphasized.

30. The mandate of the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States, within the framework of the Mauritius Strategy and General Assembly resolution

56/227, assigns a continuing role for both advocacy and mobilization of support and resources for the implementation of the Mauritius Strategy. The Office therefore continues to take steps to advocate and seek support and resources on behalf of small island developing States to achieve the objectives set out in the Mauritius Strategy.

III. Summary of programmes to operationalize the Mauritius Strategy

31. The Department of Economic and Social Affairs, in consultation with the relevant agencies members of the inter-agency consultative group on small island developing States, has begun preparation of a draft programme to operationalize the Mauritius Strategy of implementation. All organizations and bodies of the United Nations system were invited to indicate those activities for which, by virtue of their respective mandate, they would assume responsibility in implementation.

32. The output should describe a coordinated, streamlined plan to provide broadest United Nations system support to the small island developing States in implementation of the Mauritius Strategy, clearly stipulating the responsibilities of different actors, minimizing duplication and promoting most effective synergy among the agencies. It is anticipated that the plan, when complete and fully operational, will facilitate the implementation of sectoral and cross-sectoral activities at the regional, national and local levels within the framework of the Mauritius Strategy, support the exploration of opportunities for partnerships with civil society and other stakeholder groups to advance the sustainable development of small island developing States, and support the strengthening of both regional and national institutional mechanisms as well as a strategy to enhance advocacy and promote wider awareness and understanding of the imperatives on the sustainable development agenda of small island developing States.

33. Considering that the mandate for that exercise was received on 14 July 2005, with the adoption of resolution 59/311, there has been little time for fuller debate and exchange of views among the members of the inter-agency consultative group on small island developing States on the optimal approach for preparing the plan. Indeed, the initial response of a number of agencies to the matrix circulated has yet to be received. For the purpose of this report, therefore, a summary of existing and prospective programmes is presented below under the respective headings contained in the Mauritius Strategy. This summary is based on responses to the matrix on actionable mandates of Mauritius so far received from members of the inter-agency consultative group on small island developing States.

Climate change

34. The overall framework of regulations and support for action falls within the purview of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change secretariat. National and regional initiatives on adaptation are supported by information and advice from the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, while their implementation is financed through the Global Environment Facility, UNDP and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). Regional organizations play an important role in several projects. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the United

Nations Human Settlements Programme also offer support. One example of such cooperation is the UNESCO programme on minimizing biodiversity loss through research and capacity-building for ecosystem management. While the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change provides information on the guidelines and formats for clean development mechanism projects, their formulation have been supported by UNEP, UNDP, UN-Habitat and regional organizations such as the South Pacific Regional Environment Programme. Similarly, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change provides information on relevant technologies for adaptation and mitigation, with supportive activities provided by UN-Habitat, UNESCO and UNDP through a variety of programmes. Important institutional support and technical assistance has also been extended to regional organizations by UNEP, notably the Caribbean Community Climate Change Centre.

Energy resources

35. Energy efficiency and renewable energy, long identified as key interventions for small island developing States, have been prioritized through a number of UNEP and UNDP/Global Environment Facility supported activities in all small island developing States regions. The UNESCO programme on renewable energy sources for development should contribute to these goals. The need for awareness-raising and capacity-building has been incorporated into most of these activities. There is scope for linkages between the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) international bio-energy programme and UNDP supported regional projects. UNDP and UNEP also support South-South cooperation initiatives in biofuels in the Caribbean region, in collaboration with a number of Latin American partners. UNEP contributes to financial innovation for the development of the cleanest mix of energy sources and technologies. UNDP supports public awareness and other programmes to change traditional attitudes to the use of energy and to promote wider use of renewable energy sources.

Natural and environmental disasters

36. The leadership of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction, in coordinating system-wide response to national and environmental disasters, is defined by the Hyogo Framework for Action. Synergy with the Mauritius Strategy should be promoted. Support for small island developing States in building their human, technical and managerial capacities for disaster reduction and prevention is a key component of UNDP, UN-Habitat and UNESCO activities. FAO also provides support for emergencies and rehabilitation. Capacity-building and awareness-raising are addressed by UNEP programming for awareness and preparedness for emergencies at the local level and will be addressed through the proposed tsunami early warning system, to be developed under the UNESCO International Oceanographic Commission. Similar activities are also supported by UNDP and regional organizations, including the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Response Agency, the South Pacific Applied Geoscience Commission (SOPAC) and the University of the West Indies, and national disaster management offices. Review and reform of the insurance sector to strengthen response to natural disasters is supported by the Foundation for International Environmental Law and Development and UNDP, and it is expected that the outcomes of that work will also have

implications for United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change decisions on climate change-related insurance.

Management of waste

37. Management of waste through cost-effective and environmentally sound management systems have benefited from partnership projects facilitated by UNDP and regional and national organizations. UN-Habitat should be encouraged to promote waste management linkages with its work on sanitation and freshwater, given the interest in cost-effective and affordable sanitation technologies in small island developing States, as well as UN-Habitat expertise in the design of interdisciplinary environmental management strategies. UNESCO has indicated a willingness to support reduction, re-use and recycling strategies through its inter-island and interregional cooperation for sustainable development of small island developing States. Examination of other potentially supportive activities by other United Nations agencies in the integration of waste management with agriculture, tourism, sanitation and freshwater resources should be pursued.

Coastal and marine resources

38. Many small island developing States benefit from technical assistance for the development of national programmes of action on land-based activities sponsored by UNEP. UNEP also provides training programmes on the legal implementation of regional seas agreements and related multilateral environment agreements in the Caribbean and Pacific regions. FAO offers guidance on the development of legal frameworks for more effective fisheries management and support for cooperation among fisheries and maritime control agencies. These efforts also complement the work of regional organizations such as the Forum Fisheries Agency, the Caribbean Regional Fisheries Mechanism and the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission. There are a number of agencies involved in the design and implementation of policies for the management of marine protected areas, coral reefs and related marine ecosystems. There is scope for optimizing the effectiveness of these interventions, for example, the FAO guidance on legal frameworks for marine protected areas and UNESCO support for capacity of small island developing States to implement integrated coastal area management, with the efforts of regional organizations such as the South Pacific Regional Environment Programme and the Caribbean Environmental Health Institute.

Freshwater resources

39. Capacity development for management of freshwater resources remains an important priority, and United Nations agencies have responded with a number of activities. The UNEP-sponsored Partnership Initiative on the Management of Coastal Aquifers promotes South-South cooperation among Caribbean small island developing States and countries of Latin America. FAO provides advice on water use and efficiency in agriculture and land management, as well as on technologies for abstraction. There will likely be complementarity between that and UNEP proposed projects on rainwater harvesting; UNESCO work on managing water interaction systems at risk; and the UNDP supported project on sustainable integrated water and wastewater resources and wastewater management in the Pacific, with its linkages to the Caribbean through the South Pacific Applied Geoscience Commission/Caribbean Environmental Health Institute water and

climate change partnership. In terms of public awareness, there is probably a need to integrate such efforts with the management of wastes in small island developing States. Wider effort will be made to harness the coordinated United Nations response towards the achievement of the water and sanitation goals agreed for the International Decade for Action "Water for Life".

Land resources

40. FAO plays a leading role in the provision of policy advice on land use and tenure, integrated land, water and plant nutrition policies, planning and management, and efforts to enhance food security, providing technical assistance in value-added food chains, including organic agriculture. UN-Habitat proposes to become a supporting partner in such activities. There are also possible complementarities in the UNESCO programme on minimizing biodiversity loss through research and capacity-building for ecosystem management. In some small island developing States regions there are UNEP, UNDP and GEF funded activities in the field of integrated ecosystems management, such as the sustainable land management projects in the Pacific region, which are in the project development phase.

Biodiversity resources

41. The Convention on Biological Diversity secretariat also provides a framework for advisory services, guidelines and information, and recently inaugurated an island biodiversity programme, which is expected to energize the implementation of biodiversity conservation measures in small island developing States. Supporting activities include the FAO advice on legislation and regulation to comply with international agreements regarding alien plant species, particularly the International Plant Protection Convention, and support for strengthening national plant protection services to reduce the introduction and spread of pests, including weeds, of quarantine significance. The UNESCO Man and the Biosphere programme, which is being implemented through UNDP, UNEP and the GEF, should be viewed as an activity complementary to the numerous national biodiversity strategies and action plans developed for the Convention on Biological Diversity at the national level. Community-based conservation efforts are also being supported by UNDP, UNEP and development partners, with a number of potential benefits through integration with marine protected areas work and integrated coastal area management plans.

Transportation and communication

42. A number of United Nations agencies provide support and training through online programmes. The growth in the access and usage of ICT in small island developing States has been exponential, yet the costs and coverage remain important considerations. Development partners and United Nations agencies are engaged in programmes for ICT literacy, community multimedia centres and developing information systems and databases, strategies to exploit opportunities in areas such as e-commerce, telemedicine, distance learning and sharing of best practices. Improvement in the delivery of services from SIDSNet has also been registered. Nevertheless, there are several opportunities for optimizing the impact of ICT in small island developing States through greater coordination or clearing house mechanism procedures. For example, the UNESCO Multimedia Training Kit and the FAO Information Management Resource Kit are highly relevant to the situations of

small island developing States, but neither has a small island developing States-specific portal or filter to enable small island developing States to utilize the particular aspects they need to use. Consultations are needed to find ways and means of ensuring that these resources have a greater value-added component for small island developing States officials and professionals, who often have to work through very slow ICT connections. The Department of Economic and Social Affairs, through SIDSNet, is well poised to coordinate activities in this field.

Capacity development and education

43. UNDP has been playing a major role in the promotion of capacity-building projects in small island developing States and through seeking to ensure that capacity-building is a major component, for example, in projects funded by the Global Environment Facility. Other United Nations agencies have also provided assistance, guidance and support for training programmes. UNESCO has a particular mandate to promote education and has reported on numerous sources that SIDS could access, for example, to promote education for sustainable development. UNESCO also collaborates with other agencies such as UNEP on the Youth Exchange Training Kit. UNDP and UNESCO support the University Consortium of Small Island States, launched at the Mauritius International Meeting. UNEP also sponsors a civil society support programme, responding to the important need to strengthen the capacity of national and regional non-governmental (NGO) networks.

Health

44. A number of United Nations agencies are engaged in assisting small island developing States ministries of health control HIV/AIDS and other communicable diseases. One of the critical new issues identified at Mauritius was the need for greater support for capacity-building and for overcoming the loss of skilled health-care professionals through migration. There are also the needs to increase cooperation of the relevant agencies of the United Nations system and regional organizations and to increase and improve the delivery of assistance to the small island developing States regions in the area of health.

Culture

45. Culture has emerged as an integral element in the promotion of sustainable development in small island developing States. UNESCO has numerous programmes aimed at safeguarding cultural heritage, heritage conservation and promotion of cultural arts. A large number of private sector companies and community-based organizations are also very active in the promotion of cultural industries. The Mauritius International Meeting panel discussion on culture concluded that investment in education and training to broaden the skills base in all aspects of cultural activities and entrepreneurship, technical assistance for collecting data on cultural industries, developing better market intelligence and stronger distribution networks for cultural products and services in small island developing States are challenges that must be addressed. The commitment of small island developing States Governments, with the support of international partners, to develop creative industries in small island developing States will only be realized if there is recognition that culture and cultural industries can significantly improve the quality of life of the people of small island developing States. A leading role could

be played by UNESCO in mobilizing such support from the United Nations system and the international community.

Governance

46. Attention is being given by small island developing States to the establishment of national sustainable development strategies. Ensuring participatory approaches and the involvement of women and major groups in decision-making are considered important by small island developing States. UNDP, UNESCO, UN-Habitat, FAO and other United Nations agencies also have complementary programmes in place. The Department of Economic and Social Affairs has embarked on a process with the Pacific small island developing States to develop national sustainable development strategies, and it could coordinate with the other agencies involved.

Trade and finance

47. The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) provides technical assistance to small island developing States towards strengthening national capacities to negotiate World Trade Organization accession beneficially. UNCTAD also provides direct substantive support to small island developing States members of the World Trade Organization, providing information and analysis on the impact of trade liberalization on small island developing States economies. This core supporting role of UNCTAD has been particularly relevant to small island developing States in the context of their efforts to gain specific recognition in the World Trade Organization through the work programme on small economies. UNCTAD also assists small island developing States efforts to advocate a revisiting of the graduation criteria for least developed countries, and provides support for small island developing States efforts towards product diversification and niche marketing in such areas as organic farming, tourism, offshore investment services and the development of cultural industries. Small island developing States also receive assistance in institutional capacity-building through appropriate training and sensitization activities and relevant advisory services, to enhance their participation in trade negotiations at multilateral and regional levels. Cross-sectoral collaboration with FAO, UNEP, UNESCO and UNDP in these areas should be pursued.

Other issues

48. UNESCO has programmes in support of youth and education, such as training for youth in basic sciences, and UNDP supports numerous community-based projects in small island developing States for expanding opportunities for the poor. The small island developing States would benefit from more coordinated support for implementation of initiatives for youth and community development. The integration of the Millennium Development Goals into the planning and development process is also an important complementary approach to the small island developing States sustainable development strategy. Attention will be given to assisting small island developing States ensure congruence of the Millennium Development Goals with the implementation of the Mauritius Strategy. Assistance from the international community will also be required to support small island developing States efforts to address their security concerns.

IV. The way forward

49. The principal message of the Mauritius International Meeting was the need for more effective, sustained implementation of the Programme of Action, to be achieved through (a) further consideration of and appropriate response in intergovernmental forums to the vulnerabilities of small island developing States; (b) the increased investment of financial and technical resources to support the efforts of small island developing States in advancing national implementation through capacity-building and institution strengthening; (c) enhancing regional institutional support for implementation of the small island developing States agenda; (d) promotion of an integrated participatory approach to sustainable development, engaging civil society and other regional and international stakeholders; and (e) enhancing coordination of United Nations system support for the implementation of the Mauritius Strategy.

50. The strategies, mechanisms and recommendations for action identified in this report offer sound first steps towards ensuring more efficient and effective implementation of the small island developing States agenda. Careful monitoring and reporting of progress in their implementation should contribute substantially to ensuring the faithful discharge of these new mandates.

Notes

[1] Report of the International Meeting to Review the Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, Port Louis, Mauritius, 10-14 January 2005 (United Nations publication, Sales No.E.05.II.A.4 and corrigendum), chap. I, resolution 1, annex I.

[2] Ibid., annex II.

[3] A/CONF.207/11, chap. XVIII.

[4] Two core technologies will be applied to integrate the above-mentioned tools: the Content Management System and the Learning Management System. Both will be combined into a single Decision Support System, which will become the new technical framework for SIDSnet.

Annex

Matrix of actions to operationalize the Mauritius Strategy

Sector	*Mandated initiatives*	*United Nations system partners*
Climate change	National and regional initiatives on adaptation to climate change; support for the development and/or transfer of appropriate technology to address climate change adaptation and mitigation; and support for the formulation and implementation of CDM projects.	GEF, UNFCCC, UNDP, UNEP, UNESCO, UN-Habitat
Energy resources	Programmes to enhance energy efficiency and further develop renewable energy options; support for the formulation and implementation of integrated and interdisciplinary bio-energy policies and programmes; promotion of public/private partnerships and market-oriented approaches to diversifying energy sources. Support from regional development banks; implementation of public awareness programmes in communities and among stakeholder groups on the impact of fossil fuel-based energy use on the environment; support for training programmes to change traditional attitudes in the use of energy, to promote wider use of renewable energy sources; and support for the establishment of regulatory frameworks and supportive public policies regarding the development and use of renewable energy.	FAO, UNDP/GEF, UNEP, UNESCO
Natural and environmental disasters	Support for SIDS efforts to build human, technical and managerial capacities for disaster reduction and prevention; strengthening of national capacity for natural disaster preparation, response, mitigation and rehabilitation; review of regional mechanisms and establishment/strengthening of early warning capacity; increased public education and awareness on disaster preparedness and mitigation measures; design and implementation of interdisciplinary, intersectoral partnerships in national environment management plans; mainstreaming risk management in the planning process; and support for SIDS review and reform of the insurance sector to strengthen response to natural disasters.	FAO, ISDR, UNDP, UNESCO, UN-Habitat

Sector	*Mandated initiatives*	*United Nations system partners*
Management of waste	Identification of cost-effective, environmentally sound waste management systems; exploration of innovative mechanisms to finance waste management initiatives; strengthening of national and regional regulatory regimes; and promotion of reduction, re-use and recycling strategies.	UNDP, UNESCO, UN-Habitat
Coastal and marine resources	Support for national efforts to complete the delimitation of maritime boundaries; support for the completion of continental shelf claims; programmes to strengthen the monitoring, reporting, enforcement and control of fishing vessels, so as to reduce the incidence of IUU fishing; acquisition and installation of surveillance and monitoring systems; support for efforts for early ratification of/accession to relevant Fishing Agreements; and support for the design and implementation of integrated policies for the management of marine protected areas, coral reefs and related marine ecosystems.	FAO, UNEP, UNESCO
Freshwater resources	Support capacity development in water quality and water demand management; programmes to improve infrastructure for water catchment, storage and distribution; programmes to strengthen sanitation and sewerage systems; and design and implementation of strategies to contain pollution, including through public awareness campaigns.	FAO, UNEP, UNESCO
Land resources	Programmes and legislation to improve land management and strengthen land tenure; programmes to reduce watershed and land degradation; implement sustainable forest management strategies to reduce forest degradation and loss; support strategies to enhance food security and promote agricultural diversification; support national and regional research initiatives in the use of appropriate technology, particularly for small farmers; strengthen agricultural extension services; support the development of aquaculture; support the development of early warning systems to monitor food security; and programmes to improve food processing, marketing, product development and quality control.	FAO, GEF, UNDP, UNEP, UNESCO

Sector	*Mandated initiatives*	*United Nations system partners*
Biodiversity resources	Support for control of the primary pathways for potential invasive alien species; support for the development of local capacity to protect and effectively use traditional knowledge; educate and build community capacity to protect and conserve indigenous species and their habitats; and support the development in SIDS of natural resource accounting systems.	CBD, FAO, UNDP, UNEP, UNESCO
Transportation and communication	Programmes to support increased ICT literacy and skills development; support for the development of ICT community multimedia centres and for the creation of subregional hubs; support low-tech communication mechanisms for rural and remote locations; support increased local content and applications; programmes to bridge the digital divide, especially in rural communities; develop/strengthen postgraduate programmes in ICT; develop information systems and databases; explore strategies to exploit opportunities in areas like e-commerce, telemedicine, distance learning, sharing of best practices; and assist SIDS in the development and strengthening of intellectual property laws.	UNDP, UNEP, UNESCO
Capacity development and education	Support national strategies to promote comprehensive access to primary education; support programmes for on-the-job training and adult education; support regional and national programmes to promote technical and vocational education; strengthen distance leaning arrangements; improve teacher training programmes; explore the establishment of/participation in Regional Centres of Excellence; support for the SIDS University Consortium initiative; development of programmes to engage the human, technical and financial support of the SIDS Diaspora; and support programmes to strengthen SIDS national and regional NGO networks and civil society structures.	
Health	Review/strengthen strategies to control HIV/AIDS and other communicable diseases; support the pursuit of partnerships for programmes to combat HIV/AIDS; support for enhanced data collection on demographic and epidemiological trends; support public health strategies and public awareness	

Sector	*Mandated initiatives*	*United Nations system partners*
	campaigns to reduce incidence of non-communicable diseases, and enhance immunization programmes; and programmes to support the development/appropriate use of traditional medicines.	
Culture	Assist SIDS efforts to strengthen national policies and legislative frameworks to support and protect cultural industries; support capacity-building to promote cultural industries in music, art, festivals, theatre, film and cultural tourism, among others; support the development of measures to improve institutional capacity for marketing cultural products; support the development of capacity in SIDS for rights management and for patent, trademark and copyright administration to protect all forms of creative innovation; assist SIDS in implementation of legislation to protect indigenous intellectual property; support programmes to protect natural, tangible and intangible cultural heritage, including public-private partnerships; encourage community-based participation in policymaking to safeguard cultural heritage; assist SIDS in the preservation of local languages through locally developed curricula; assist SIDS strategies to improve the management and maintenance of cultural and natural heritage sites; support programmes to record traditional knowledge and preserve customary cultural values, traditions and practices; support the development of programmes to teach and transmit traditional community values to infuse basic education with local and indigenous knowledge; and programmes to support strategies to attract increased venture capital for small and medium cultural enterprises and to promote the establishment of culture support funds in SIDS.	UNESCO, UNCTAD
Governance	Support for the design and implementation of national sustainable development strategies in SIDS; support for efforts to strengthen community involvement in decision-making, planning and programme development; support for programmes enhancing a participatory approach to sustainable development with civil society; support SIDS strategies to enhance the representation of women in	FAO, DESA,UNDP, UNEP, UNESCO, UN-Habitat

Sector	*Mandated initiatives*	*United Nations system partners*
	decision-making at all levels; programmes to more actively engage corporate and other private sector actors in sustainable development; promotion of public-private partnerships; strengthen regional mechanisms in support of sustainable development in SIDS; and identify/design programmes for SIDS-SIDS, South-South cooperation, particularly in sharing of best practices, capacity development and transfer of appropriate technology.	
Trade and finance	Provide technical assistance in support of SIDS efforts to prepare for World Trade Organization accession; assist SIDS in analysing the impact of trade liberalization, with a view to implementing appropriate adjustment strategies and enhancing their competitiveness in international markets; support product diversification and the development of niche markets; support through research and analysis SIDS advocacy towards ensuring that their environmental vulnerability is appropriately taken into consideration by the multilateral trading system; support the development and strengthening of legal, regulatory and physical infrastructure to assist SIDS in promoting a domestic environment conducive to entrepreneurship; support the design and implementation of measures to strengthen the private sector and promote micro-enterprise; support the establishment of innovative financial mechanisms to respond to the structural disadvantages of SIDS; capacity-building to strengthen SIDS participation in international trade negotiations at the national and regional levels; strengthen SIDS institutional capacity to develop trade-related policies and relevant regulatory measures; assist in the analysis and formulation of policies and the development of infrastructure required to address issues relating to sanitary and phytosanitary measures (SPS) and technical barriers to trade (TBT); support research and analysis towards re-examination of the criteria for graduation from LDC status, taking into consideration the special vulnerabilities of SIDS; analysis of SIDS debt sustainability to support effective debt	FAO, UNCTAD, UNDP, UNEP, UNESCO

Sector	*Mandated initiatives*	*United Nations system partners*
	management; and assist SIDS in the design and implementation of programmes to encourage foreign investment and facilitate remittances.	
Other issues	Support SIDS strategies to expand employment opportunities for youth and the poor; support SIDS strategies to expand education opportunities for youth and the poor; support the integration of the MDGs into the planning and development processes of SIDS; and assist SIDS in strengthening legislative framework and in implementing regulatory and other measures to address their security needs.	DESA, UNDP, UNESCO